

Every Child Learning Every Day



October 2002

An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

Volume 1, Issue 2

READY TO LEARN

Try baking bread with "The Little Red Hen"

Teachers from across Idaho have shared some of their favorite books and activities for children as part of Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard's "Dinner and a Book" initiative.

This month's was submitted by Dorothy Whitehead, a Title I teacher at Dworshak School in the Cassia County School County District.

Book: "The Little Red Hen" as retold by Brenda Parkes published by Rigby, copyright 1985.

Appropriate age: 4-10, read to or with a child.

Story synopsis: The Little Red Hen asks her friends to help her grow the wheat, harvest it, and finally make the bread. No one will help until the bread is ready to eat, and then every one wants to help eat the bread, but the Little Red Hen won't let them have any because they didn't help.

Interaction, activity, or recipe: After reading the story, you could make bread together, or make butter by shaking cream in a bottle.

Also discuss the importance of working together and then sharing what you have made.

Related books or topics: "The Little Yellow Chicken," or "The Yellow Chicken's House."



Good beginnings start with you

Dear Reader:

During the past few years, you may have heard about standards for students in public schools.

These standards identify what is important for students to know and be able to do in the areas of math, language arts/communications, social studies, science, health, and humanities in kindergarten through high school.

The standards will create consistent expectations for all our students as they move through our school system or from one school district to another.

Since developing standards for public schools, we have heard from many early childhood care providers that the state should identify the standards for preschool.

This past year, the State Department of Education, working



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

with early childhood educators, has created preschool standards for reading language arts and math.

WHAT INTERESTS YOU?

If you have questions or more information about early childhood education or services that you would like featured in this newsletter contact us at 1-800-432-4601 or e-mail awestfal@sde.state.id.us.

These standards are intended to be useful tools for early child care providers whose teaching now supports the learning of children later.

To help familiarize you with these new standards, each month we will feature a standard. Below is the first one for reading.

Thank you for all you do to shape the lives of our children.

Marilyn Howard

READY TO LEARN

Language's bits, pieces key to reading

In building a foundation for reading and understanding a variety of materials, young children need language experiences that relate to their world and their relationships with friends, parents, brothers and sisters.

They need opportunities to play with sounds and words, and they need to be exposed to a variety of written materials to see and hear every day.

These materials might include labels on a cereal box, signs outside, story books, and informational books.

Learning to use comprehension skills begins with understanding that letters, numbers, pictures, and other symbols hold meaning. Making connections between reading and what children already know begins with experiences with a variety of books.

Gaining word rec-



ognition skills begins with seeing pictures, sounds, and symbols. All of these experiences lead to young children building vocabulary and verbal language skills, which are the foundations for developing the ability to read and write.

The Idaho Preschool Standards for Language Arts reflect the belief that children learn language and literacy skills in the same way they learn to speak, naturally and slowly, building to the skills needed for success in school and life.

Standard 1: "Reads a variety of traditional and electronic materials for information and understanding."

The skills that are needed to meet this standard

OCTOBER BOOKS

"The Popcorn Dragon," by Jan Thayer
"The Popcorn Book," by Tomie de Paola.

include:

a) Phonological awareness: starting to learn about sounds, how sounds are taken apart, blended, and can be put together in different ways.

b) Phonics: starting to learn that the sounds of spoken language are linked to printed letters.

c) Beginning to learn about print: finds the front of a book, knows that print moves left to right, etc.

d) Pretends to read easy and predictable books.



RESOURCES

What is Child Find?

Child Find is a service that finds and screens preschool children's growth and development.

Every school district in Idaho is responsible for finding and serving children 3 through 5 years of age who are experiencing problems in development.

Districts do this through yearly public awareness activities, such as advertisements in the newspaper, flyers, ads at the health department, etc.

The public awareness materials include information about who to call and where to go for screening.

There is no cost to parents for this service.

Why should I ask about my child's development at an early age?

You should ask because children grow and develop most rapidly during the early childhood years.

Skills in thinking, moving, and talking form the foundation for success in school.

Children who demonstrate developmental delays in one or more developmental areas may qualify for services from their local school district.

Areas that may be evaluated include speech/language, thinking ability, self-help skills, social skills, motor skills, emotional concerns, hearing, and vision.

How do I know if my child needs to be screened?

The following behaviors may indicate potential problems. It is important to remember that many typical children display these behaviors:

- * Difficulty interacting appropriately with peers and/or adults.
- * Difficulty understanding language.
- * Difficulty using language.
- * Restless; excessive activity level.
- * Speech difficulties.
- * Temperamental, overly sad, or irritable.
- * Difficulty with a particular area of learning—reading or math or language arts.
- * Difficulty following and/or remembering directions.
- After reviewing this behavior list, ask yourself:
 - * Does my child's behavior or skills differ significantly from his/her peers?
 - * Does my child's problem behavior occur frequently and persistently?
 - * Has my child's behavior occurred over a long period of time?

If the above or some other areas concern you, contact your local school district about its screening program.

NUTRITION

Pumpkins good for more than carving

Pumpkins, a type of winter squash, are symbolic of the fall season and the harvest. They also offer a bounty of nutritional value.

The pumpkin is a versatile vegetable. In addition, to the traditional jack-o-lantern and pie filling, the strong-flavored flesh can be baked, roasted, or used in soups or stews.

Pumpkins are grown around the world, providing edible flesh, seeds, and flowers; smaller versions can be baked and eaten whole.



MORE NUTRITION INFO

Idaho www.nal.usda.gov/Childcare

Like all orange-pigmented vegetables, pumpkins are rich in beta carotene, the plant form of Vitamin A.

The pumpkin is high in Vitamin C, low in fat and high in fiber.

Pumpkin seeds also are a rich source of protein. Try this recipe for "Crunchy Pumpkin Seeds" adapted from the "Food, Family and Fun," a U.S. Department of Agriculture publication.

Pumpkins seeds
Seeds from 1 Pumpkin

1 tsp salt per 1 cup of seeds
Preheat oven to 350
Have the children help carve the Halloween pumpkin. Save the pulp that contains the seeds. Have the children put pulp in a colander and wash the stringy matter off the seeds in cold running water. Blot seeds dry with a paper towel.

Spread the seeds on a cookie sheet in a single layer.

Sprinkle seeds with salt (To lower the amount of sodium use Mrs. Dash)

Bake for 12 minutes. The seeds should be dry and light brown.

Cool before eating.

To avoid the risk of choking seeds, serve this snack to children 3 years old and older.

READY TO LEARN

Solving problems key to mastering math

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the world's largest organization devoted to improving mathematics education, offers simple tips to help their children understand math.



This month's tip — Problem solving: Problem solving is key in being able to do all other aspects of mathematics. Through problem solving, children learn that there are many different ways to solve a problem and that more than one answer is possible. It involves the ability to explore, think through an issue, and reason logically.

to solve routine as well as non-routine problems. In addition to helping with mathematical thinking, this activity builds language and social skills such as working together.

What adults can do: Children are naturally curious about everyday problems. Invite your children to figure out solutions to everyday situations. You can do this by talking about the problem, asking your children for ways to solve it, and then asking how they came up with those solutions.

Encourage your children to suggest problems and ask questions, too. Your children will learn how to figure things out and will learn that many problems can be solved several different ways.

ACTIVITIES

Popcorn can be a feast for the senses

Can you hear the oil sizzling?

Can you smell the delightful scent filling the air?

Have your youngsters explore the five senses and talk about their experiences as they pop some popcorn.

You will need a popcorn popper, king-size bedsheet, popcorn, and oil.

Spread the sheet on the floor, and invite your children to sit at the edge of the sheet.

Ask them to close their eyes as you prepare a surprise.

Encourage the children to concentrate on what they hear and smell while their eyes are shut.

Place the popper in the

The Popcorn Song

(sung to the tune of "Down by the Station")

In the popcorn popper,

Kernels go ker-plink.

I can smell it cooking—

Almost done, I think!

See the popcorn popping,

Fluffy and so white.

Pop! Pop! Yum! Yum!

Tastes just right!

center of the sheet and turn on the heat.

Pour in the oil and popcorn. Leave the lid off!

Invite the children to open their eyes and watch the popcorn hop right out of the pan onto the sheet. After a few kernels have popped, put the lid back on.

When all the kernels have popped, serve each child a small helping in a paper cup.

Ask students to concentrate on how the popcorn feels and tastes.

After everyone has finished his or her snack, invite the children to describe the popcorn popping and how popcorn feels and tastes.

On a big sheet of paper, write "Hear," "Smell," "See," "Feel," and "Taste."

Write the students words and phrases on the paper.